



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST
AMERICAN LANE, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. PE29 1TQ

RATIONALE

Safely managed educational visits and outdoor learning with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum and a vital part of this school. Visits give the opportunity to extend pupils learning, enrich their appreciation and extend the understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. Visits can be the catalyst for contextual learning, improved engagement with learning, increasing academic performance and a lifetime interest. Outdoor learning and visits are to be encouraged.

PURPOSE

- A. To ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to benefit from outdoor learning and educational visits
- B. To ensure that all visits are safe, well planned, purposeful and appropriate to meet the educational needs of those taking part.
- C. To ensure that the school identifies roles, responsibilities, training, monitoring and support for those from the school working in this area.
- D. To comply with the Academy policy for Educational Visits and outdoor learning keeping up to date with further advice
- E. To ensure that DfE Health and Safety Advice is met.
- F. To ensure that when further advice is sought it comes from technically competent people.

1. Provision of Employer Guidance

Spring Common Academy has formally adopted "*National Guidance*"(NG) as "*Spring Common Academy Employer Guidance*". This Educational visits guidance can be found on the following web site: www.oeapng.info

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements their employer's guidance; therefore Spring Common Academy employees must follow the requirements and recommendations of National Guidance", as well as the requirements of this Policy Statement.

Where a Spring Common Academy employee commissions activity, they must ensure that such commissioned agent has:

systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by National Guidance.

2. Scope and Remit

The NG document Section 1 clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Educational visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)
- facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

3. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

As an employer, Spring Common Academy is required to ensure that its employees are provided with

- appropriate guidance relating to visits and LOtC activity;
- employer-led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- access to advice, support and further training from an appointed Adviser that has proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

The appropriate guidance for the management of outdoor learning and educational visits in Spring Common Academy is the National Guidance web site www.oeapng.info

The relevant training courses are:

- Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) Training - this establishment is required to have a current, trained EVC in post.
- Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) Revalidation - EVC's are required to undertake a formal revalidation from time to time. Currently this is every three years.
- Visit Leader Training - this course is strongly recommended for all those who lead visits and off site activities. This may also include role specific training / assessment courses.

For the purposes of day-to-day updating of information, Spring Common Academy EVC and Visit / Activity Leaders are directed to the posting of "*Information Updates*" from Cambridgeshire County Council on Evolve.

Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or require clarification or further help and guidance, they should contact their Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), or the **Outdoor Education Adviser**

The Outdoor Education Adviser for the Academy is: Stephen Brown
Contact Details: stephen.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Office phone. 01480 379677
Office Email outdoor.education@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

5. Risk Management

As an employer, Spring Common Academy has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an "acceptable" or "tolerable" level. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring Spring Common Academy to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy.

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. Spring Common Academy strongly recommends a "Risk-Benefit Assessment" approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is "acceptable". HSE endorse this approach through their "**Principles of Sensible Risk Management**" and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal or Spring Common Academy requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the

process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people.

6. Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:

- either suffered a life threatening injury or fatality;
- is at serious risk;
- or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

As an employer, Spring Common Academy is committed to providing emergency procedures to support staff in the event of a critical incident. Cambridgeshire County Council Children's Services Learning offer this support to all Cambridgeshire Academies as a free service, and this should be reflected in school plans.

To activate support from Spring Common Academy, visit leaders, and other staff should carry at least two numbers of SLA members who can activate the school Critical Incident Plan if required.

These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians. (or published in this policy)

7. Monitoring

As an employer, Spring Common Academy ensures that there is sample monitoring of the visits and outdoor learning activities undertaken by its staff. Such monitoring should be in keeping with the recommendations of National Guidance. There is a clear expectation that the monitoring function is a delegated task, principally carried out through systems put in place by the EVC.

8. Assessment of Leader Competence

National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of Spring Common Academy Policy that all leaders and assistants have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned in line with the NG guidance. Staff should maintain their training and qualifications on their own profile within Evolve. For D of E leaders, there are clear established standards for leading expeditions, and these are published on Evolve.

9. Role-specific Requirements and Recommendations

National Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found within **Spring Common Academy** management structures. These are:

- Governing Body (Employers)
- Head
EVC

National Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found the establishment. These are:

- Member of Board of Governors or Management Board
- Head teacher
- EVC
- Visit or Activity Leader
- Assistant Visit leader
- Parents/ Volunteer Adult Helper

10. Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

Spring Common Academy Heads/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit/Activity Leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

11. Vetting Checks

Spring Common Academy employees who work *frequently or intensively* with, or have *regular access to* young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

12. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is "effective".

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- Staff Competence, experience, qualifications (if required)
- Activity - nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved)
- Group - age (including the developmental age) of the group; ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);
- Environment - nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions,
- Distance away from the base

However, as an exception to the above, Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years.

13. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

If the visit is led and managed by a provider, then a variety of approaches can reduce the need to pre visit. Equally there is no need to receive the risk assessments from a provider that holds one or more of the below accreditations.

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge
- AALS licensing
- Adventuremark
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Spring Common Academy takes the view that where a provider holds such one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. This policy clarifies the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement.

14. Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and Spring Common Academy holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. Spring Common Academy also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by staff for which the employer is responsible.

Some level of Personal Accident Insurance is provided for all Spring Common Academy employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident. However, Visit/ Activity Leaders should be advised that they should consider taking out less limited personal accident cover privately, or obtain cover through a professional association.

Spring Common Academy should contact the Insurers to seek clarification of the above, including any circumstances requiring early notification of specialist activities to the insurer. They should also ensure they have obtained current information regarding any special policies that may be available to offer more comprehensive cover.

15. Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every *reasonable* effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Spring Common Academy takes all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and LOTC thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate

- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Employers, Heads/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue. Under the Equality Act 2010, (previously the Disability Discrimination Act 1995), it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably;
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

16. Good Practice Requirements

To be deemed competent, a Spring Common Academy Visit / Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognized good practice for that role.*

All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

National Guidance sets a clear standard to which Spring Common Academy leaders **must** work. The guidance states:

“a competent Visit /Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:

- *Knowledge and understanding of their employer’s guidance supported by establishment-led training.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of the staff, the activity, the group and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience*
- *In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification.”*

Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. The EVC should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader’s qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to of a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group

management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

17. Transport

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it and establishments **must** follow the specialist guidance provided in Spring Common Academy transport policy. All national and local regulatory requirements **must** be followed.

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.

The Visit Leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures.

18. Planning

Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures and national guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes).
- Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team carry out an exercise in order to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigor (an Ofsted expectation), then it will be essential that these outcomes are prioritised, and

appropriately targeted. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focussed and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a "Risk Benefit Assessment". Once the targeted outcomes have been recorded, it will then be possible to identify appropriate on-going review and evaluation strategies, including indicators.

To reduce bureaucracy and encourage activity, the need for formal consent must be considered. When an activity is part of a planned curriculum within normal curriculum time, then a formal consent is not necessary. However, those in a position of parental responsibility need to be fully informed. Parental contributions is separate issue from consent.

The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as "**SAGED**" as explained below.

- **S**taffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- **A**ctivity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
- **G**roup characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- **E**nvironmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
- **D**istance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?

Policy agreed on: _____

Signed on behalf of the Trustees____

Committee: _____

Author: _____

Review date (optional): _____

Website Y/N